

coupling means for coupling the control circuit to the monitor circuit; and
control means for forcibly turning OFF the discharge control switch
regardless of whether the over-discharge is monitored by the monitor circuit.

1/ 38. (New) A control circuit for controlling a discharge control switch which
is provided between a load and a plurality of battery cells, said discharge control
switch being controlled by a monitor circuit which monitors over-discharge of
each of the battery cells and being turned OFF when the over-discharge is
monitored, said control circuit comprising:

a first terminal which receives a first external signal; and
control means, coupled to said first terminal, for forcibly turning OFF the
discharge control switch in response to the first external signal, regardless of
whether the over-discharge is monitored by the monitor circuit.

8/ 39. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 38, further comprising:
a second terminal which receives a second external signal,
said control means being coupled to said second terminal and turning ON
the discharge control switch in response to the second external signal.

2/ 40. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 39, further comprising:
a detecting circuit which detects whether or not the battery cells are being
charged,

said control means being coupled to said detecting circuit and turning ON
the discharge control switch when said detecting circuit detects that the battery
cells are being charged.

9/ 41. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 40, further comprising:

a detecting circuit which detects whether or not the battery cells are being charged,

said control means being coupled to said detecting circuit and turning ON the discharge control switch when said detecting circuit detects that the battery cells are being charged.

3 ~~42~~. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim ~~40~~², wherein the discharge control switch is controlled by the monitor circuit after being turned ON by said control means.

10 ~~43~~. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim ~~41~~^{3 9}, wherein the discharge control switch is controlled by the monitor circuit after being turned ON by said control means.

4 ~~44~~. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim ~~37~~¹, further comprising:
a detecting circuit which detects whether or not the battery cells are in an overcharged state,

said control means being coupled to said detecting circuit and turning ON the discharge control switch when said detecting circuit detects that at least one of the battery cells is in the overcharged state.

11 ~~45~~. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim ~~38~~¹, further comprising:
a detecting circuit which detects whether or not the battery cells are in an overcharged state,

said control means being coupled to said detecting circuit and turning ON the discharge control switch when said detecting circuit detects that at least one of the battery cells is in the overcharged state.

5/ 46. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 44, wherein the discharge control switch is controlled by the monitor circuit after being turned ON by said control means.

10/ 47. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 45, wherein the discharge control switch is controlled by the monitor circuit after being turned ON by said control means.

6/ 48. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 37, further comprising:
a circuit which turns the discharge control switch ON when a voltage of any of the battery cells reaches a predetermined voltage value.

13/ 49. (New) The control circuit as claimed in claim 38, further comprising:
a circuit which turns the discharge control switch ON when a voltage of any of the battery cells reaches a predetermined voltage value.--

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 14, 2001, has been received and carefully noted. The period for response having been extended from December 14, 2001, to March 14, 2002, by the attached Petition for Extension of Time, the amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 6-20 have been canceled without prejudice. New claims 37-49 have been added. Applicants submit that the new claims are fully supported in the specification and the drawings, as originally filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added by the amendments made herein. Accordingly, claims 37-49